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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 16 December 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia dated 14 December 2011, on the eighteenth round of the Geneva international discussions, held on 14 December 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the sixty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alexander **Lomaia**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the identical letters dated 16 December 2011 from the Permanent Representative of Georgia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia on the eighteenth round of the Geneva international discussions

At the eighteenth round of the Geneva international discussions, held on 14 December 2011, the issues of security and stability in Georgia's occupied Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions and the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees to the places of their original residence were discussed. At the meetings of the two working groups held on 14 December, participants took part in an individual capacity. Discussions were moderated by the representatives of the United Nations, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and attended by the participants from Georgia, the Russian Federation and the United States of America. The Head of the Provisional Administration of the former South Ossetian Autonomous District, Dimitri Sanakoev, and the Chairman of the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, Giorgi Baramia, took part in the eighteenth round of the discussions. Representatives of the proxy regimes from Tskhinvali and Sokhumi also participated in the working groups. The delegation from Georgia was headed by the Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergi Kapanadze.

During the eighteenth round of the discussions, the Georgian side expressed its appreciation for the efforts of the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office for Protracted Conflicts, Giedrius Čekuolis, and welcomed the 2012 Irish OSCE Chairmanship's Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the new Co-Chair of the Geneva discussions, Pádraig Murphy.

Within the first working group of the Geneva discussions, which focuses on the ways to reach an agreement on the non-use of force and the international security arrangements, concrete steps from the plan proposed by the co-chairs were discussed. It was emphasized that security and stability will be established only after the Russian Federation undertakes the commitment not to use force against Georgia and fully implements all provisions of the Ceasefire Agreement of 12 August, including the withdrawal of the military forces from Georgia's occupied regions. The co-chairs of the Geneva discussions, as well as the representatives of the United States once again reiterated their call on the Russian Federation to pledge the non-use of force towards Georgia. The necessity of such commitments from the Russian side is extremely important in the context of continuous militarization of Georgia's occupied territories and against the background of the intensification of aggressive rhetoric from various Russian officials. In this context, particular attention was drawn to the recent provocative statements from Mr. Patrushev and Mr. Lavrov. The Georgian side remains hopeful that the Russian Federation will reciprocate the unilateral pledge by Tbilisi on the non-use of force made in November 2010 and will undertake the commitment not to use force against Georgia. Work will continue in this respect during the upcoming rounds of the Geneva talks.

The Georgian side once again requested to discuss seriously the establishment of international security arrangements inside the occupied regions. It was stressed by many participants that the international security arrangements represent the best guarantee for peace and the non-resumption of hostilities. The co-chairs once again urged the participants to discuss in good faith the issue of an international presence within the occupied territories, and to enable the European Union Monitoring Mission to fully implement its mandate and guarantee unhindered humanitarian access to the regions. Concrete steps have been proposed in this regard, which will continue to be reviewed during the forthcoming rounds.

During the eighteenth round, the Georgian side once again brought to the attention of the co-chairs the cases of the violations of freedom of movement in the vicinity of the occupied territories and expressed its concern regarding the continuous practice of arbitrary detentions of the local population by the Russian Federal Security Service border guards and the proxy regimes. Once again, the co-chairs have issued a strong call for all participants to refrain from such practices and to release the detained persons.

Participants stressed the continuous good work of the Joint Incident Prevention and Response Mechanisms (IPRMs) and expressed readiness to continue addressing the issues affecting the security of the populations on the ground in good faith. Several participants underlined the necessity of full utilization of the potential of IPRMs.

Within the second working group, unfortunately, Moscow and its proxy regimes still refuse to discuss humanitarian issues related to the safe, dignified and voluntary return of IDPs and refugees to the places of their original residence. It is absolutely necessary to uphold the internationally recognized right of IDPs and refugees to return to their homes, and the Georgian side remains hopeful that next rounds will demonstrate progress in this regard.

The nineteenth round of the Geneva international discussions will take place on 29 March 2012.

Tbilisi, 14 December 2011